1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

586 property, animals and children. If there is only one daughter the parents will divide her marriage price; she can live with either. If there is only one son the spouse keeping him must pay to the other Rs. 40, a cow and a pig and if the father keeps him a length of cloth to the wife, if the wife keeps him a copper vessel[9] to the husband. The last formal divorce in Lingthem was that of the first Dorjé Lapoon from his third and fourth wives (see Chapter Sixteen); a distant 'aunt' of the Mandal's was also divorced in this way in Sakhyong but there were no children.

If a woman runs away the husband's relatives will come for her and ask for her back or else claim the marriage price; but if the wife is unsatisfactory the husband will merely claim and get compensation in the form of the head and two legs of an ox and a scarf and rupee. Should such a girl re-marry a representative of the husband goes to the marriage; if the representative is the maternal uncle he is given Rs. 3 and half a leg of an ox; if the paternal uncle, Rs. 5 and the rump. By a recent decision of the twelve Mandals of Zongu in council it has been decided that these small recompenses shall be generally accepted for a runaway wife, instead of the large sums demanded earlier.

In the event of a woman showing a marked and continued preference for some man not her husband, the husband will almost always let her go to the lover. If the man cannot be classified as a 'younger brother' he must pay to the injured husband all the marriage expenses which he himself had paid earlier; or alternatively the girl's family will provide another girl as a substitute without further payment, but in that case the payments which the husband would have recovered from the lover will go to the girl's parents. If the lover is classifiable as a 'younger brother' the wife will probably be given to him for a small symbolical payment without any formalities; but it is understood that the younger brother will give special help if the elder brother remarries. Adultery, without really marked preference, is not a reason for divorce; and no anxiety is felt or expressed about the paternity of a man's children.

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581 In Lepcha theory marriage is not only a contract between two individuals, but also a contract between two groups; and they have

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[9] A copper pot is the most conspicuous Lepcha valuable: it is used in a great number of sociological transactions.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

The money-lenders were first established in Mangen about thirty years ago, and for the first ten years or so everyone thought it was a great convenience to be able to meet his outside requirements on the spot: but now there is no one who is not in their debt, for as one of them said to me in Mangen: "Sir, these Lepchas are very simple people!"

The Lepcha is, in any case, extremely improvident; but owing to the ease with which it is now possible to replenish his stock of grain, or to borrow money in Mangen, he never considers the question of whether he can afford a feast or an animal for a sacrifice. Most people now obtain their seed from the money-lenders, in payment for which they have to set aside a certain definite proportion of the cardamom crop, without regard for what the current rate for that particular year may eventually be. It makes no difference what kind of seed is taken; the repayment is always in the form of cardamoms. The people also obtain advances in the form of cloth, salt, kerosene oil, and so on. For eighty pounds of rice, worth, on an average, say, seven rupees, they have to pay back a like weight of cardamoms, which at the present time is worth fifteen rupees; but the price fluctuates and in the boom years was as high as sixty rupees, but of these matters the ignorant Lepcha knows practically nothing. Similarly, cloth to the value of ten rupees is paid for with eighty pounds of cardamoms. The money-lenders will not allow the people to repay their debts in cash, even should this be available, nor will they accept any form of payment at the time a transaction takes place, for this would enable the people to keep out of their clutches and would be entirely contrary to their system of dealing. Should a man be unable to liquidate his debt at the time of the cardamom harvest interest is charged at the rate of half the principal per annum; that is to say, fifty per cent compound interest. The interest charged on cash loans is at the rate of six annas in the rupee per annum, which works out at thirty-seven and a half per cent per annum; but throughout India no man may be sued in court for more than twelve per cent. As a matter of

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VII.

S'ùk-bū-li ùk-kuk [1]) *ol-bo re to gó s'en,*
Mīl tak-gum na-lem [2])
Ki-rung [3]) *pū-tā ùk-kuk ol-bo re to gó s'en*
Gi-yok-tauk fa-lek nam gó mi yu [4])

O! who changed the course of the Singbali [5]) river?
It was the powerful fairy, the sister [6]) who is behind?
O! who changed the course of the Kirungpata river?
It was a powerful like me a *gi-yok-tauk* young brother!

The reference to the rupee and the occurrence of several Tibetan words in the following, shows its modern character; though it may be founded on an older version.

VIII.

Kar-vo kap c'am-bu gya-lam-bi [7]) *tyat só na lé*
Dùk-tam-pāu kom kat bo yet nāu yok s'ù
S'ùk mā-yi [8]) *p'i-lùk a-t'ok ùnk se gīl-lā yo*
Sāk la ma-run-ne lok la ma-run-ne, [9])

Oh come with me, a little *kar-vo* boy to the cross-roads
And I will give thee a *ding-tam-pū* [10]) rupee
Though I have taken refreshing *Shing-mai* foreign (snuff
My heart is swelled with grief.

IX.

INHOSPITALITY.

539 *Yuk-mo tak-vok kāp ùnk bā*
574 *A-som tup ma-só na-mó*
Hao-dó tak-vok ok ùnk bā
563 *Ñet-* [11]) *tyet a-som tup so s'o.*

When a Yangmo's door is shut
One cannot find foot to eat
But when his door is wide open
One gets food to fully satisfy.

This may be paraphrased as follows: "Even when a Yungmo's door is open wide there is nothing to eat though plenty inside". It refers to the notorious inhospitality of the Yungmo and other half-breed Lepchas who have intermarried with the Limbu tribe and so treat the pure Lepchas disdainfully. Other such mixed groups of Limbus and Lepchas are the *Mang-mū-mo* (in the Kulhait valley), *Lak-som-mo* in the Rathony valley, and the *Ling-dam-mo* and *Sak-mi-mo*, all of whom are proverbially inhospitable. Finally I wish to acknowledge the assistance I received from Mr. D. MACDONALD in getting the Lepcha manuscript of several of the songs, and for help in interpreting several points.

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[1]) *Ùk-kuk* is a 'branch rivulet'. [2]) Or *na-lim*.
[3]) Or *Ñi-rung*. [4]) Or *yun*.
[5]) Name of a river in Sikhim to the South of Darjeeling which through a landslip cut out a new course for itself.
[6]) *Mīl* is usually applied to a water-fairy. The phrase attached to this word means literally 'true understanding', but is said to mean 'behind'.
[7]) This word is Tibetan. [8]) Or *S'am-ma-ū*. [9]) Or *Mar-yun-ne*.
[10]) The *tam* of this phrase may either be the descriptive „flat thing", or it may be the Indian *tanka*, the rupee, as coins are not indigenous.
[11]) Or *Kat*.

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